



USAID | PHILIPPINES

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Office of Program Resources Management

(632) 552-9907

Tuesday, February 14, 2006

“USAID/Philippines does not vouch for the accuracy or the opinions of the articles provided in this press clipping service and assume no responsibility for their content. Please contact USAID/Philippines at infoph@usaid.gov if you have any questions about USAID programs and projects.”

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #12 (SO12)

(Conflict Reduced in Mindanao and Other Areas Vulnerable to Violence)

Tawi-Tawi buys land for P10m hatchery

PANGLIMA Sugala, Tawi-Tawi — The provincial government of Tawi-Tawi bought a two-hectare property in Luuk Pandan, Panglima Sugala, Tawi-Tawi for the establishment of a P10-million, multispecies hatchery.

Nestor Delasas, provincial planning and development officer, confirmed the purchase on behalf of Tawi-Tawi Gov. Sadikul Sahali.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), assisted by the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority and USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) program will build the hatchery.

The hatchery will produce fingerlings and juveniles of fish species that command high market prices in various Asian markets. Target commodities include Humpback Grouper, abalone, and sea cucumber.

Demands for these commodities show potential for contributing to Tawi-Tawi's economic growth. Chinese traders from Shenzhen buy live humpback grouper for as high as \$30 per kg.

Abalone, on the other hand, sells for \$47 per kg, and sea cucumber, which is very popular in China, commands a price of up to \$17 per kg.

The hatchery's net income from its first year of operation is projected at \$300,000. At full production, it will provide employment and enterprise opportunities for about 1,150 residents, and will contribute up to \$40 to \$50 million annually to the local economy through the export of hatchery-produced, high-value aquaculture commodities.

BFAR said the hatchery will complement a 200-ha in-sea mariculture park, in Tawi-Tawi. The park will complement the primary activities of the

hatchery by serving as a "grow out" area for the fingerlings produced by the hatchery. Once production begins, the hatchery will provide a reliable supply of grouper fingerlings and abalone spats to more than 1,000 farmers.

As part of an exploratory program implemented by the GEM program's Targeted Commodity Expansion Program (TCEP), about 350 growers in Tawi-Tawi have sold one production batch of green grouper, fingerlings of which were imported from Indonesia.

An additional 650 Tawi-Tawi-based growers expect to receive grouper fingerling for trial production by the first quarter of 2006.

"Once the hatchery is running, we won't have to depend on Indonesia for our supply of *lapu-lapu* fingerlings, and growers won't have to extract from the wild anymore," said

Adel Oviedo, deputy team leader of TCEP.

"Questions have been raised about why Tawi-Tawi has been chosen for this project," said Lauro Ilagan, GEM's senior aquaculture specialist. The reasons are the highly favorable water and biophysical conditions of Tawi-Tawi's pristine marine environment, the relative stability of the province's peace and order situation, and the belief that many impoverished Filipinos will benefit from this project.

Commercial organizations, including Alsons Aquaculture Corp., have made initial evaluation visits to the hatchery and grow-out sites. Ilagan reports that additional private companies are also considering the possibility of leasing the hatchery from the government and to manage it as a profit-making enterprise.

(Source: Manila Standard Today, 2/14/06, page B4)